

# GUIDE

TO

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

### DOES ROMANS VII. 7-25, EXPRESS THE EXPERIENCE OF PAUL THE CHRISTIAN, OR OF SAUL THE PHARISEE?

Few questions pertaining to religious experience, have been more warmly debated in the Christian world than this; and perhaps there is no other question concerning which the truly wise and good have taken more decidedly different grounds.

It is a fact, generally known in the theological world, that the early Christian fathers and commentators uniformly believed that in these verses, Paul designed to express his experience previous to his conversion to Christ; and that Augustine, in the fourth century, was the first who introduced the idea that has since generally prevailed in the church, that they are actually expressive of his experience after that event; and that they truly describe the conflict which is maintained in every pious soul.\*

\* This is fully admitted by Professor Hodge, of Princeton, N. J., in his notes on Romans, although he himself adopts the opinion of Augustine and the great body of Calvinists upon the subject. This also is admitted by Calvin, in his notes on this chapter. "Augustine," he says, "was some time in this common error," and it certainly is no mean argument against Augustine and his successors, that men who lived in a brighter and purer day of gospel light than themselves; men like Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, and Polycarp, and Cyprian, and Eusebius, some of whom were personally acquainted with John, the beloved disciple, and who sealed their testimony for Jesus with their blood, believed an entirely different doctrine, upon this subject, from themselves. Perhaps the falling away from primitive power and holiness, of which Paul speaks, 2 Thess. ii. 3, commenced about this time; for certainly nothing would tend more to put out the light of holiness in the church, than a general reception of the doctrine that the language of this chapter expresses Paul's Christian experience, even in his best estate. If Augustine was the *first* to introduce this idea, then certainly the apostles themselves did not believe it; and thus we arrive legitimately at the conclusion that Paul did not design to be so understood by any reader of this epistle.

Some of the most learned modern commentators have again embraced the opinion of the first Christian fathers, that the apostle is *not* here personating a renewed, but an unrenewed man; and that however descriptive his words may be of the feelings of many a professed follower of Christ, they are not descriptive of his Christian experience, nor of that of any other believer who, with him, can truly triumph in the language of the eighth chapter of this same epistle.\*

Generally, concerning scripture passages which have been the subject of as much debate and speculation as this, it is esteemed a comparatively unimportant matter which side in the controversy a man takes; he may believe any pretty well accredited exposition of the text, and escape the charge of heresy from every one but a confirmed sectary or bigot. But the design of Paul, in this passage, has by many been deemed so palpable, and so important as a touchstone of Christian experience, that to question the fact of his here expressing the conflict of a sanctified soul, has been esteemed nothing less than a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints; and a denial of the doctrines of native depravity, or of the special agency of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, has been counted hardly a greater departure from the truth as it is in Jesus.†

“The main design of this chapter, (says Barnes,) is not very dif-

\* This ground is taken by Macknight, Turretin, Tholuck, Knapp, Platt, Stuart, Clarke, Bloomfield, Doddridge, and some others of less note. Dr. Doddridge, however, seems to take a middle ground upon the subject, and supposes that Paul may be speaking here “of a truly good man, whatever lamented imperfections might attend him.” He however says — which by the way is admitting all that we ask — that “the character assumed here is that of a man first *ignorant of the law*, then *under it*, and sincerely desiring to please God; but finding, to his sorrow, the weakness of the motives suggested, and the sad discouragement under which it left him; and last of all, *with transport discovering the gospel*, and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy by it. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the confirmed Christian that he really was when he wrote this epistle, is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as to what he expressly asserts, chap. viii. 2,—‘For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.’” Although I call him a man master, yet, from my infancy, I have been taught to consider it safe to follow the excellent author of “*The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*,” as he followed the Lord.

† Professor Hodge, after enumerating many estimable men who, of late, have rejected the Augustinian theory upon this subject, says—“There is nothing, therefore, in this opinion, which implies the denial or disregard of any of the fundamental principles of evangelical religion.” Well would it be for the peace of the church if all Calvinists were as liberal in their views upon this subject as the learned Professor of Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Princeton.



ficult to understand. It is, evidently, to show the insufficiency of the law to produce peace of mind to a troubled sinner." Doddridge says of the section from verse 7, chap. vii., to the end of verse 4, chap. viii., that "to wean the believing Jews from their undue attachment to the law of Moses, the apostle represents at large how comparatively ineffectual its motives were to produce that holiness which, by a lively faith in the gospel, we may so happily obtain." In the estimation of both these expositors, then, the design of this chapter is not to state the experience of a renewed follower of Jesus Christ, but of a legalist, striving to obtain a righteousness by the deeds of the law. And although the former believes that the apostle is here speaking of a real Christian, yet I think it must be difficult for him to reconcile such a belief with the above quoted remark relative to the "design of this chapter."\* As the inspired writer had previously shown that no man can be *justified* by the deeds of the law, so here he shows that no man can have *peace with God*, by a mere external obedience to the requirements of the law: not that the law is unholy, or unreasonable, or the cause of sin in itself; but simply because the subject thereof is morally depraved; and that while he remains under the power and dominion of sin, as every unrenewed soul is, he can never so obey a law that is spiritual and holy, as to secure thereby the approbation of his conscience, and peace with God. I do not design, however, in this article, to undertake an exposition of the chapter under consideration, but merely to introduce some popular arguments in support of the theory of the earliest and the most intelligent modern commentators on this epistle.

Verse 5 is undeniably expressive of the experience of an unrenewed soul:—"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." By the term *flesh* here is, undoubtedly, meant the unregenerated state of the soul; that state in which the apostle says, chap. viii., verse 8, a man "cannot please God," and from which he had been delivered by the Spirit of God. Paul cannot mean literally when we were in the *body* the "passions of sin did work," &c., for he was still in the body when he

\* According to the popular theory, the design of the apostle in this chapter is not to "show the insufficiency of the *law* to produce peace of mind to the troubled sinner," but to "show the insufficiency of the *gospel* to produce peace with God;" for it is undeniable that the subject of this experience, whether he be saint or sinner, is very far from having peace. And if the gospel leaves its subject who, like Paul, is under its highest influence, in such a wretched state, where would the law leave him? and wherein is the former so very preferable to the latter? and how is it more competent to subdue sin and sanctify the soul?

says to the believing Romans, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." The term *flesh*, therefore, here and in the following chapter, undeniably means the unregenerate state: that state to which our Lord alludes, John iii. 6, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh," &c. Verse 6 is as unquestionably the antithesis of verse 5. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Here is a description of the renewed state—of the soul that has been delivered from the condemnation wherein it was held—and been brought "into the glorious liberty of the children of God." But instead of going on directly, and enlarging upon the subject here summarily introduced, viz., the deliverance and experience of a renewed soul, the apostle stops and first answers the objection which the legalist would raise against his position,—that he thus brings a reproach upon the law, by denying to it a renovating or life-giving power,—and shows that the difficulty is not to be ascribed to the law, that the passions of sin prevail in the soul to bring forth death; but in the moral depravity of the soul itself; in the power of sin which rules and prevails therein: and then goes on to the end of the chapter with the sentiment briefly stated in verse 5, that sin prevails over the unrenewed soul, holding it in bondage, and bringing forth therein only the fruit of death; and then, to verse 17, of chap. viii., he enlarges upon the sentiment stated in verse 6 of this chapter, that believers are delivered from the curse of the law and the power of sin, and are enabled to serve Christ in newness of spirit. To me it appears undeniable, that chap. vii., verses 7—25, is but an enlarged repetition of the sentiment of verse 5: and that chap. viii., verses 1—17, is but an enlarged view of the sentiment of verse 6: and as the 6th verse of chap. vii. is undeniably the antithesis of verse 5, so is the first part of chap. viii. the antithesis of the close of chap. vii.: and that consequently if verse 5 refers to the unrenewed state, so does the enlargement or illustration of the sentiment therein stated, which occupies the remainder of the chapter from verse 7 refer to the same state. That this is the fact, appears to me evident from the following considerations:

1st. The language, "*I am carnal*," is altogether too strong for such an one as Paul the aged to use concerning himself; especially when immediately afterwards he says, "To be carnally minded is death," and "The carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." The spiritual mind is in this connexion placed in prominent contrast to



the carnal; and it is shown to be utterly impossible for both minds to be in the same person at one and the same time. If Paul was carnal, he certainly was not at the same time spiritual. That he was once carnal, there is no manner of doubt; and that he was now spiritual, is equally evident.\*

\* "The present tense shows that he is describing himself as he was at the time of writing. *Carnal*, fleshly, sensual, opposed to spiritual. This word is used because in the Scriptures the *flesh* is spoken of as the source of sensual passions and propensities. Gal. v. 19-21. The sense is, that these corrupt passions still retained a strong and withering influence over the mind." *Barnes' Notes*. It is strange indeed that a popular expositor of the words of inspiration should so commit himself as Mr. B. does in the above quotation. What does Paul say, Gal. v. 19-21? "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And what iniquities characterized Paul's life, that a Christian expositor, in the nineteenth century, should quote these words in proof that he was *carnal* when he wrote his epistle to the Romans? Was he indeed in the wretched state here described? Was he also shut out of the kingdom of God? How much more appropriate to have quoted in Paul's case the following 22d and 23d verses, which show what are the "fruits of the Spirit." In his notes on this very passage, Mr. B. says, "This passage furnishes the most striking and unanswerable proof of human depravity. Paul represents these things as 'the works of the flesh,' the works of the unrenewed nature of man. They are such as human nature, when left to itself, every where produces." They are so indeed; and if this passage may be quoted as parallel to Rom. vii. 14, then certainly "to be carnal" is to be in an unrenewed state. Had Mr. B. forgotten, when he wrote the above note on Gal. v. 19-21, that he had, on Rom. vii. 14, quoted this very passage in proof that "Paul was speaking of himself as he then was," when he said "I am carnal?" Had he also forgotten the exhortation in Gal. v. 16, "This I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh?" and his own note thereon, "What the Holy Spirit would produce, Paul states in ver. 22, 23. If a man would yield his heart to those influences, he would be able to overcome all his carnal propensities." And yet did Paul "walk in the Spirit" while he was at the same time carnal? Did Mr. B. also forget his own note on Rom. vii. 14, when he commented on I. Cor. ix. 27, "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection;" i. e. "he was not under the dominion of evil passions, but was wholly under the dominion of the gospel?" And what is it, I would ask, to be "wholly under the dominion of the gospel" but to have the "whole body, soul and spirit, sanctified and preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ?" Can a man possibly be wholly under the dominion of the gospel, and yet be "carnal, sold under sin?" I am here reminded of the remark of a London divine, quoted in a late New York Observer. "If the religion of Christ is not able to save us from sin in this world, it will be worth but little to us in eternity." There is an inconsistency then, here, in our good Br. B., but no greater than every expositor falls into, who maintains that in the 7th chapter of Romans, Paul is "describing himself as he was at the time of writing." I will but ask, how long after he wrote the 7th chapter was it before he wrote the 8th? and is this also "descriptive of himself, as he was at the time of writing?"

To be "*sold under sin*," also, is as strong language as the Holy Ghost ever employs against the vilest of sinners: even impious Ahab, and the idolatrous Jews, who had caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire of Moloch, are only said to have sold themselves to work wickedness. And it is not a little remarkable that all our commentaries and reference Bibles refer the reader of Rom. vii. 14, to 1 Kings xxi. 20-25 and 2 Kings xvii. 17, as parallel to the declaration, "I am carnal, sold under sin." That Paul was thus when a persecutor, and injurious to the church, is unquestionably true; but that he was still a slave to sin, and entirely within its power and dominion, as is implied in being *sold under sin*, cannot be true;\* for he assures us himself, that "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death," and, also, that he had been brought into the "glorious liberty of the children of God." Through all his epistle: he labors to show the vast difference there is between a renewed and unrenewed soul;—between a child of God and a child of the devil: and if he here speaks in the present tense, it is the first and only time that he ever makes the difference between the righteous and the wicked so small as to be infinitely imperceptible, even to an angel mind. In defence of the popular exposition of this chapter, it is said that "the language which Paul here uses, is the same that Christians now employ to express the strength of that remaining depravity against which they struggle; and that

\* The expression here used—"sold under sin"—is borrowed from the practice of selling captives taken in war, as slaves. It hence means to deliver into the power of any one, so that he shall be dependent on his will and control. The emphasis is not on the word sold, as if any act of selling had taken place, but the effect was as if he had been sold, i. e., he was subject to it, and under its control: and it means that sin, contrary to the prevailing inclination of his mind, had such an influence over him as to lead him to commit it, and thus to produce a state of conflict and grief.—*Barnes.*

It is marvellous indeed, that such an one as the author of "Notes Explanatory and Practical on the Epistle to the Romans," who has been greatly persecuted because he believes that sin is a purely voluntary exercise of the soul, should here so far adopt the doctrine of his persecutors, as to assert that in Paul's case it was not voluntary, but of physical necessity. How inconsistent this with his note on the words "hath made me free," in chap. viii. 2., "that is, has delivered me from the predominating influence and control of sin." How a man can be "under the control of sin," and at the same time be "delivered from its predominating influence," I must leave for the respected expositor himself to explain. This, however, is the unavoidable dilemma into which those fall who undertake to defend the Augustinian theory, that Paul is here speaking of his Christian experience. "If the Son, therefore, make you free, ye shall be free indeed." How can this be reconciled with the doctrine that a "freedman of Christ" is still "sold under sin"—"subject to it, and under its control?"



no other language will so well express their feelings." But it is certainly questionable whether any intelligent Christian on earth would ever have thought of using language so extravagant, not to say false and dishonorable to Christ, if he had not first put it into the mouth of the sanctified Paul; and then he uses it because he thinks Paul used it before him; and if required to give the evidence that Paul did thus use it, he answers, "Because Christians of a later day cannot better express their feelings in any other language." This kind of argument is but a begging of the question.

2. It was not true of Paul that he could not do the good that he would, or that he did the evil that he would not: neither is this true of any other enlightened Christian on earth; unless indeed the doctrine of inability and sinful necessity be based upon eternal truth.\* That an enlightened, convicted sinner may

\* "If sin exist any where, it must be in the *heart*. The motions of the body, considered otherwise than as indications of the heart, bear no more relation to praise or blame than the motions of a clock. But if sin is in the heart, it must consist in the *opposition* of the heart to *good*. If the opposition is really an excuse, then sin is an excuse for itself, and is no longer sin — the difference between holiness and sin is no more — both are extinct, and men are machines." "It is not true that God requires of sinners more than they are able to perform. It is not true that they cannot love and obey him. They have ample power, and nothing prevents but their desperate wickedness."— *Griffin's Park Street Lectures*, p. 197. Was Paul, then, "desperately wicked" when he wrote this epistle? Are all enlightened Christians in this same awful state, that they cannot do the good that they would? Should any one reply, Yes, "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," I would ask, what heart is thus — the renewed or the unrenewed? If both, why quote the text in proof of the necessity of regeneration? and what is the effect of regeneration, if it does not change such a heart for the better? But if this language of the Holy Ghost refers only to the wicked, as such, why should it be so often quoted as applicable to the righteous; and why introduced as proof that Paul was speaking of his Christian character, when he said, "I am carnal, sold under sin?"

"This scheme of things exceedingly diminishes the guilt of sin, and the difference between the greatest and smallest offences; and if it be pursued in its real consequences, it leaves room for no such thing as virtue or vice, blame or praise in the world." "In the strictest propriety of speech a man has a thing in his power, if he has it in his choice or election; and a man cannot be truly said to be unable to do a thing, when he can do it if he will. It is improperly said that a person cannot perform those external actions which are dependent on the will, and which would be easily performed, if the act of the will were present. Therefore, in these things to ascribe a non-performance to the want of power or ability, is not just; because the thing wanted is not a being *able*, but a being *willing*. There are faculties of the mind, and a capacity of nature, and every thing else sufficient, but a disposition; nothing is wanting but a *will*."— *Edwards on the Will*.

Should it be said that Edwards believed in the Augustinian theory of the 7th chapter of Romans, I reply, in this imperfect state of being "great men

find himself in this dilemma is no doubt true ; and he can never be delivered therefrom but by the mighty power of God through the Spirit. But that the soul that has been made free from that wherein it was once held, is still held therein, is an absolute contradiction in terms. Paul assures us that he fought a good fight and kept the faith ; that he lived in the Spirit, and was led by the Spirit ; and that in Christ's strength he could do all things ; and therefore certainly could do the good that devolved upon him, and that he willed to do.

If the apostle is here giving an account of his Christian warfare, then there is one difficulty in the philosophy of the mind which the masters of science have neither stated, nor undertaken to elucidate or make plain : and that is, how two opposite principles can *rule* in the soul at one and the same time ; i. e., how Christ can rule therein by love, and at the same time sin so rule in it, as to bring it into subjection thereto ; or how holiness and sin—Christ and Belial—can have equal and undivided dominion over the same soul. According to the popular theory, Christ enters the soul of the believer, and expels thence the usurper who has claimed to be its God ; and at the same time leaves so much sin, which alone is the devil's work, remaining therein, as to bring it into captivity to its law. If the difficulty can be solved in any better way than by at once cutting the knot, and admitting, with the early Christian fathers, that Paul teaches no such absurdity in the connection under consideration, I have not yet been able to learn it.\*

are not always wise." If any person can reconcile such a belief with the above extract, he is at liberty to do it ; I cannot. Should it again be said, Paul's words are certainly applicable either to the saint or the sinner, and equally conflict with the doctrine of *Edwards* above quoted, I answer, certainly not, if by the *will* in Paul's sinner we understand the assent of the rational powers, or the dictations of an enlightened conscience. The drunkard certainly often cherishes a hearty good will to forsake his cups, but he has not moral power to carry out his wise purpose. The slave to vice often resolves to be free, that he may share the respect of his fellow men, but he is morally unable to sustain these feeble resolutions. The sinner often desires to become a saint, but how to perform the needful work he finds not. *Edwards*, therefore, uses the term *will* in a higher sense than it is used in the chapter under consideration. Where there is a sanctified *will*, there is always a *way* to the performance of duty.

\* Should it be asked, What then was the Christian warfare which Paul maintained ? I answer, certainly it was not literally *warfare with sin* in his own soul ; for "if sin exists any where, it must be in the heart, and must consist in the *opposition* of the heart to *good*." He had many and aggravated temptations and liabilities to sin with which to contend ; and how often he fell before them is not left on record, and must be a matter of speculation in the Christian world. Christ promises to save his people from sin



3. The language of verse 24 is altogether too strong for Paul the saint to use concerning himself, unless he believed in the doctrine of physical depravity in distinction from moral; and also that the former is not like the latter, removed, or in any degree affected by the renovating agency of the Holy Ghost. But Paul tells us in another place that he kept under his body, and brought it into subjection to the law of Christ; and of course did not, with his flesh or animal powers, serve the law of sin. There was no occasion, then, for him earnestly to desire to be delivered from a state of moral conformity to Christ, and of physical subjection to his will. Indeed such a prayer would have been exactly the reverse of what he desired. A convicted, anxious sinner, may well say, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me," &c.: but a man whose "whole body, soul and spirit, had been sanctified," could never with propriety utter such language. If Paul, the subject of visions and revelations, and joy unspeakable, could with propriety say, "O wretched man that I am," in what possible sense does Jesus Christ save his people from the power and dominion of sin? If *he* was *wretched*, who on earth ever could with propriety triumph and rejoice?\*

if they look unto him for such salvation; but he does not promise to save them from temptations and liabilities to sin. Bunyan's Christian Pilgrim lost his load of sins when he came in full view of the cross of Christ; and I presume that Paul also laid off his at the same place. And yet our Pilgrim had many and severe conflicts subsequently, before he reached the gates of the celestial city; but they all appear to have arisen from temptations and fightings without and fears within, as the apostle assures us that his did: "We were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears," &c.

The phrase "striving against sin," I know is scriptural; but the connection plainly shows that it alludes to a warfare very different from what is generally understood by "*fighting sin*." Doddridge paraphrases the verse (Heb. xii. 4) thus: "You have not, as yet, undergone the severest proof of your integrity, nor resisted unto blood, striving against sin as he did who made his life a sacrifice to duty." If Paul's warfare was such as often ended in blood, it was certainly a "striving against a sinful world," as Jesus Christ did; and not a striving against sin in his own soul, which never could end in blood, unless, by its predominating influence, it was the blood of self murder. Eminent expositors,—as Doddridge, Bloomfield, Stuart, and others,—suppose the *sin* here to be put for *sinner*s; meaning the heathen, or Jewish persecutors, who, though they had inflicted many evils upon them, had not yet proceeded to the shedding of their blood.

\* In the last number of the Biblical Repository is an article by Rev. Dr. Woods, in reply to Mr. Mahan, on Christian perfection; in which the venerable writer says, page 169, "It is a fact that devout Christians and orthodox divines have, in all ages, maintained this precious doctrine, that *full provision is made in the gospel not only for the forgiveness of sins, but for the complete sanctification of God's people*. I might fill volumes with quotations from evangelical writers, from Augustine down to the present day, in which this grand sentiment is strongly asserted, and clearly illustrated, and is set forth as the

4. The Augustinian theory appears to involve the apostle in a theological absurdity which an intelligent modern divine would hardly like to be charged with ; that is, of believing in the perfect renovation of the moral powers of the soul by the Spirit of

foundation of hope and the spring of effort to believers. Let any one read the practical writings of Calvin, Flavel, Owen, Bunyan, Watts, Doddridge, Pres. Davies, Good, and numberless other authors, ancient and modern, and he will find that they exhibit this sentiment in all its preciousness. I hope to be excused, if I take the liberty to say that no truth has been more familiar to my mind, or more zealously inculcated in my preaching and conversation than this, *that the Savior has made provision for the entire deliverance of his people from sin ; that the gospel contains a remedy for all our spiritual diseases ; that there is a fulness in Christ, adequate to the supply of all our need,* &c. This sentiment, so emphatically stated, is sustained by the writer through the three following pages, when he arrives, page 173, at the following question. "*Do the provisions of the gospel for the complete sanctification of God's people prove that they will in fact be completely sanctified?*" and the answer to the question is thus given by Dr. Woods: "Now Mr. Mahan is no stranger to reasoning ; and he will, I am persuaded, bring to the consideration of this subject, an active, discerning intellect, and a kind, candid heart. I shall then make my appeal directly to him. And I ask my dear brother, has not God, in this favored land, made full provision for the comfortable support of all the inhabitants? such provision, that all who enjoy the other common blessings of life in an ordinary degree, may, by suitable exertions, obtain such a support? But does it follow, from such provision, that all the inhabitants will actually obtain a comfortable support? I ask again, is not provision made in the gospel for the salvation of all sinners to whom the gospel is preached? This my brother, in common with others, is accustomed to teach as a matter of great moment. But does it follow from this that all who hear the gospel will be saved? May not something else come in to prevent that salvation for which provision is made? If so, then the general question returns, can we infer from the simple fact that provision is made for the accomplishment of a particular object, that the object will actually be accomplished?"

Certainly not ; but if every inhabitant of this land was in perpetual destitution and want, notwithstanding the fact that thousands of them made "suitable exertions" to obtain a "comfortable support," who then would believe that God had "made full provision for the comfortable support of all the inhabitants?" Not a soul on earth would believe such a declaration, I am sure. So, if not a single sinner ever had been or ever would be saved by the gospel of Christ, what created being in the universe would believe that ample provision has been made for their salvation? The evidence that God has "made ample provision for the comfortable support of all the inhabitants of this land," arises from the fact, that all who enjoy the common blessings of life, and make suitable exertions, do in reality obtain such support ; and it can arise from no other source. So the evidence that "provision is made in the gospel for the salvation of all sinners," rests entirely upon the fact that multitudes actually are saved, and consequently that others might be saved. If the gospel had never yet exhibited sufficient efficacy to convert a single soul, all the reasoning in the world would not convince an intelligent mind that it possesses sufficient to convert one. And so if Paul gave "all diligence to add to his faith virtue," &c. ; if he "fought a good fight and kept the faith ;" if he lived "by the faith of the Son of God," and rejoiced "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," and was still forced to read his Christian experience in the 7th chapter of Romans ; and if this also has been the case with all the best Chris-



God, with a remaining entire depravity of the physical powers. His mind, or will, it is said, was good enough; and New England orthodox divines generally suppose that where the will is right, all is right, and deny the doctrine of a physical depravity back of the will, which the Holy Spirit does not touch in regeneration.\* And of what possible avail or advantage would be the renovation of the will, if there still remained an unregenerate physical depravity, capable of keeping the renewed soul under its power, as is implied in the popular view of this chapter? But all this difficulty and apparent absurdity is at once removed if the apostle is allowed to speak his own mind upon the subject. He says—"I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;" and then goes on to speak of the conflict under consideration. Now admitting that the term *flesh* here means the same, and as much, as it does in the preceding fifth verse, and also in the following chapter, and Paul tells us himself whether he is speaking of his renewed or of his unrenewed nature;—and by what authority the term here is limited to what is called the "old man," or "unregenerated parts of the soul," or to an inherited tendency to inordinacy," or to a "physical depravity," I have never been able to learn. Certainly the "old man of sin" had no good thing in him; but in Paul he had already been "crucified and put off entirely;" and how he, "dead and buried," could still prevent the performance of that which was good, is utterly unaccountable. See chap. vi. 6, and Col. iii. 9. That Paul had temptations and infirmities, and liabilities to sin, I do not

tians that ever lived,—who on earth, or in heaven, would believe that "*full provision has been made in the gospel for the complete sanctification of God's people?*" If not a soul ever has been *completely sanctified*, or ever will be, this side of heaven, of what benefit is this "precious doctrine," of which Dr. Woods speaks so confidently? And why so "jealously preach and inculcate it," if it never can be made available to the Christian? Either, then, Paul did *not* "give all diligence to add to his faith virtue," &c.,—did *not* receive "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ,"—or the doctrine that Dr. Woods so confidently asserts is utterly false, if he was still forced to read his Christian experience in Rom., chap. vii. Dr. Woods says, page 175, that "we *may* render perfect obedience to God if we apply ourselves to the work *as we ought*, and *fully avail ourselves* of the gracious provisions of the gospel." The question is, did Paul do this or not? What Christian will dare say he *did not*? I will but ask, if the doctrine so emphatically stated by Dr. Woods be true, is it not as much the duty of the Christian minister to preach it as it is to preach salvation for the sinner by the cross of Christ? And wherein do those offend against the peace and purity of the church, or the truth as it is in Jesus, who do zealously preach it?

\* Calvinists hold that depravity originally and essentially lies in our *moral* nature. "The doctrine relates to man as a *moral* being, subject to a *moral* government; and accordingly the depravity predicated of him is a *moral* depravity."—*Dr. Woods' Prize Essay on Native Depravity.*

doubt; but that these so prevailed over the power of Christ resting upon him, as to prevent the performance of good, and lead to the practice of evil, I do not believe. The term *flesh*, then, in the 18th verse, was employed to designate the whole man previous to regeneration; and consequently the following verses are descriptive of the struggles and conflicts of a sinner who is laboring to obtain righteousness with God by the deeds of the law.\* The contrast, certainly, is as great and as palpable between the experience here expressed and that in the subsequent chapter, — where it is said, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,” — as it is between darkness and light, or sin and holiness. And I humbly conceive that no person can read the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans, without feeling that there is an inseparable difficulty in ascribing the different exercises here expressed to the same individual at once and the same time. And although there is a difficulty in ascrib-

\* “‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh.’ What is meant by flesh at the close of the verse? This we learn from the connection and drift of the discourse. Our Savior evidently meant *that* in man which disqualifies him for the kingdom of God, and which renders it necessary that he should be created anew by the divine Spirit. It is perfectly obvious that the word *flesh* is here used to denote a *sinful nature*; a state in which the soul is subject to carnal and earthly desires, instead of being subject to the law of God. This interpretation of the word is supported by the fact that the same word is often used in a similar sense in other passages of scripture. In Rom. vii. and viii., to be *in the flesh*, to have a *fleshy* or *carnal mind*, denotes a state *opposite* to being a Christian — a state of enmity against God — a state of spiritual death. And in Gal. v., the apostle speaks of the flesh as that in man which lusteth against the Spirit; i. e., has desires in opposition to holiness: and when he mentions the works of the flesh, he mentions the various forms of sin.” “The flesh signifies man’s sinful disposition: his moral depravity. It certainly refers to man as a moral, accountable being, and indicates *such a sinfulness* in his character, that he must be renewed by the Spirit, or he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.”—*Dr. Woods’ Prize Essay on Native Depravity.*

If it be asked whether Dr. Woods does not believe in the Augustinian theory upon this subject, I answer, according to the plain, unsophistical import of the above extract, he certainly does not. Or if he does, the objector to his scheme of *total depravity* — which his prize essay labors to sustain, and does indeed nobly sustain — would naturally inquire, “Was Paul *totally depraved* when he wrote the 7th chapter of Romans? Had he then no good moral principle in him? If he had, and is only speaking of *remaining depravity*, when he says: ‘I know that in me, i. e., in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;’ why may not another man, and even every man that is in the flesh, have some good thing in him also, as well as Paul, who by his own showing was *carnal*; i. e., still in the flesh? And of what avail is your labored argument, drawn from John iii. 6, in support of the doctrine of *entire* moral depravity, and of the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost? If the regenerate are still in the flesh, wherein do they differ from the unregenerated; and what is the effect of regeneration upon the soul?” How the advocates of the Augustinian theory pertaining to this chapter would answer such an objection, I leave for them to show.



ing to Paul in the flesh, i. e., in an unconverted state, feelings such as are expressed in verse 22, where he says he "delights in the law of God after the inward man;"\* and where also he says,

\* The *inward man* evidently means the understanding, or the conscience. And what enlightened man is there in Christendom who does not, in the right exercise of his rational powers, approve of the divine law? Does it not "recommend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God?" If by *inward man*, then, we understand with Doddridge, and Stuart, and Clarke, and Bloomfield, the rational part of our nature, our understanding, our conscience, we shall easily arrive at the import of the original word rendered *delight* in the text. For if, as Grotius remarks, "to *approve* is the office of the *understanding*, and to *delight* in that of the *heart*," then by *sunedomai* Paul merely meant to say, "My understanding is pleased with or approves of the law of God." Macknight renders it, "For I am pleased with the law of God according to the inward man." Calvin, "For I consent to the law of God concerning the inner man." Flatt, the German orthodox commentator, "For I delight or approve of the law of God in my reason, or conscience;" and Henry also makes the *inner man* to signify the *conscience*. Rosenmuller, "I approve of the law of God in my mind, or reason." The word literally signifies to *consent to*, to *congratulate*, to *be pleased with*, and *delight in*: and by what authority certain commentators assert that it here means the highest rapture of the soul, when this is the *only place*, according to the Englishman's Greek concordance, that the word is used in the New Testament, is more, probably, than they themselves can show. If the *connection* demands such a rendering, then let it be adopted. But does it, really? Is not the meaning above given much more consonant to the whole scope of the chapter? Can the heart, or the seat of spiritual light, and life, and salvation, feel the highest raptures of delight in the contemplation of the law of God, at the same time that it so prevails therein as to keep it in subjection to its law? Impossible, while it is possible that the understanding of a very wicked man may approve of the law of God, and, as in the case of Saul the Pharisee, take pleasure therein. Not even the longest course of vice will ever wholly extinguish in the human mind an approbation of the law of God. It recommends itself to every man's, and probably to every fallen angel's conscience in the sight of God. Dr. Clarke says the purest Greek ethic writers use the very words here rendered *inward man* to signify the rational powers, and never to signify the renewed man; and Dr. Doddridge alludes to the same fact, and paraphrases the verse thus: "For with the better and nobler powers of my intellectual nature, *I delight in the law of God*. I most heartily approve of it," &c. "The approbation which reason and conscience yield to the divine law as holy and good, is the truth intended to be expressed."—Stuart.

The original word rendered *will* in the text,—"*to will* is present with me,"—literally signifies to *resolve*, to *determine*, to *endeavor*, just as much as it does to *will* or *choose*. And what enlightened sinner is there on earth who does not, ten thousand times in his life, *resolve* and *determine* to do right, who, nevertheless, persists in doing wrong? He "*resolves* and *re-resolves*, and *dies* the same," perhaps. Had our translators, then, rendered the original thus, "For *to resolve* is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not," would this reading have carried conviction to an intelligent mind that the person so resolving was a renewed man? Certainly not. Yet such a rendering would have been just as literal as the present is, and much more accordant with the general scope of this and the following chapter. For could not Paul, led by the Spirit, and, in Christ's strength, able to do all things, "find how to perform that which is good?" Every man, under

in another verse, that "to will was present with him," thus apparently assuming to himself a renovated or holy will, still the difficulty here is not so great as it is to ascribe to a sanctified soul so much remaining depravity as to bring it entirely into subjection thereto: thus virtually asserting that the strong man armed keeps his usurped palace, although one stronger than he has come on purpose to dispossess him.

It is a well known fact that an enlightened conscience does approve of the divine law; and Paul, who endeavored to do God service previous to his journey to Damascus, was undoubtedly "pleased with the law of God after the inward man." The whole general sentiment of this chapter is somewhat appropriately presented in the ancient heathen saying modernized:—

"I know the right, and I approve it too:  
I know the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue."

Paul uses no stronger language here of himself, in his fallen state, than the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Isaiah, had previously used of his forefathers of the Jewish nation, even in the days of very great apostacy from God. "They seek me daily, and *delight* to know my ways, as a nation that did *righteousness*; and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice and take *delight* in approaching to God." Isa. lviii. 2. Paul, then, in reasoning with a Jew, who was tenacious of the honor of the law, and zealous towards God, would of course admit as much in his favor as Isaiah had previously done in reference to a perverse generation. If the apostate fathers had delighted in the law of God, certainly the apostate sons could do the same. The difficulty is in ascribing to any unrenewed soul the possibility of taking delight in the law of God; but the difficulty is as great in the case of Isaiah's Jews, as it would be in the case of Saul of Tarsus, and in both it must be understood in a restricted sense; not of a holy complacency, a holy delight, but of an assent of the understanding, an approval of the conscience, of the law and will of God. Indeed the whole difficulty is removed, if by *inward man* we understand the *rational powers of the soul*, instead of the *renewed nature*; and that such is its meaning, is evident from the fact that Paul uses the words which Greek writers generally used to denote only the rational powers.

An argument also may be drawn in favor of the position taken certain appeals to his conscience, resolves to forsake evil and do right; but how to perform that which he resolves he finds not, until the Spirit be poured upon him from on high; i. e., he has not, independently of this, moral power enough to keep his good resolutions.



in this dissertation from the abuse which the present popular view of the subject begets in the church. What cold-hearted, nominal Christian, what backslider, or false professor even, but can say—"O wretched man that I am;" and also, "when I would do good, evil is present with me; and the good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that do I?"\* And how can you arouse such an one from this spiritual slumber; this state, possibly, of spiritual death? He flatters himself that he is in blessed good company. Paul's experience in the 7th chapter of Romans, corresponds exactly with his own; and as he finds no disposition to arise from this state, and no motive can be addressed to him of sufficient power to produce a change, he is perfectly willing to remain where he is,—“carnal and sold under sin:” and if this was truly the Christian experience of Paul, it must be a proper standard of Christian experience for every one. Few intelligent Christians expect to live as well as Paul did; no one wisely calculates upon living better. He undoubtedly carried the principles of his religion to their utmost consequences. He attained to as high a point of moral excellence and deliverance from sin as any man can scripturally hope to on earth. He had received the “fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ;” and if such an one could be still brought into “captivity to the law of sin,” so as to be a slave thereto, then may every professed believer expect to remain therein through life. It would certainly be better if these verses must be expressive of Christian experience, to apply them, with the pious Doddridge, to some less confirmed Christian than Paul; for, says he, “to speak all these things of himself is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as with what he expressly says, chap. viii. 2,—‘For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.’” Well will it be for thousands of professed Christians who are willing to remain with Paul in the 7th chapter of Romans, if they do

\* What drunkard, even, but can often most sincerely adopt this language? And who that has labored personally for the reformation of this unhappy class of our fellow men, but can witness that no other language ever used by man is more appropriate to their case, or can more aptly express their convictions and their struggles? Often they seem to arise from their degradation, and, like Sampson, when his locks were shorn, shake themselves and determine to be free. But a worse than the Philistines is upon them; and unless Almighty power interfere in their behalf, they must for ever grind in the prison house of sin. But is this any evidence that they have a renewed nature? It is only evidence that their *inward man* is not entirely prostrated; that there remains in them some moral sensibility; some purpose, or desire to do right, although the corruption that reigns within still keeps them slaves to sin.

not remain eternally where he was spiritually previous to his journey to Damascus,—“carnal, and sold under sin.”

The last clause of the 25th verse is supposed by many to be an unanswerable proof that the apostle is in this chapter speaking of his Christian experience,—“So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin:” and they understand this as the winding up of the argument preparatory to what is said in the next chapter. I would first remark, Paul did not divide his epistles into chapters and verses, as it is now divided, and consequently no argument can be drawn in favor of the common theory from the peculiar location of these words. And secondly, there is an insuperable objection to understanding the sentence according to its present apparent import. It represents the soul as still in bondage to that very law of sin from which, with gratitude, it professes to have been delivered by God through Jesus Christ, and completely overturns the following inference, that “there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” Certainly, if those to whom there is no condemnation, “are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” which is said to make them “free from the law of sin,” it cannot with any propriety whatever be said of them that “with the flesh they serve the law of sin.” There is an absolute contradiction in saying that the delivered soul is still undelivered; and that in the flesh it is a slave to the law of sin, when immediately after it is said to be free from that law. This difficulty may be legitimately removed in two ways. First, by understanding the words, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” as a mere parenthetical exclamation, common throughout Paul’s writings; and the following sentence, “So then I myself, with the mind,” &c., as a continuation of the preceding argument concerning the slavery in sin of the unrenewed soul;—as in fact a summary of what is said more at large in the preceding verses. And second, according to Macknight, by using the Greek word *ara* as a particle of interrogation, as it is elsewhere often used in the New Testament, and then rendering the verse thus: “Do I myself, then, as a slave, serve with the mind the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin?” As though he had said, “I do not now, being delivered by Jesus Christ, serve the law of sin as I once did, when a slave thereto;” for “there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,” &c. And this is not a forcing of the passage, but a correct critical rendering, which at least saves the apostle from asserting a palpable contradiction. The former method of explaining the apparent difficulty which attends the present rendering, is that of Stuart, Bloomfield, and other eminent Biblical crit-



ics, and is, probably, preferable to the latter. The original word rendered *mind*, however, in the text, does not necessarily signify the highest powers of the soul,—the renewed nature,—but means also *intellect, design, judgment, opinion, &c.*; and the apostle might therefore merely design to say, what he had previously said, that in his *judgment* he yielded to the law of God, even while, in his unrenewed nature—his flesh, he served or was a slave to the law of sin.

The use of the first person singular by the apostle, is esteemed also certain proof by some that he is speaking of his Christian character; but an argument drawn from this fact is not very convincing to an intelligent mind. How perfectly natural would it be for a pious writer, in reasoning upon the insufficiency of the law to produce peace of mind to a troubled sinner, to speak of himself, for argument's sake, as simply under law. His great design is to show that the law cannot save the soul from the power and dominion of sin: and to do this, he speaks of himself as a depraved sinner, without a present regard to the provisions of the gospel. Such would be the course of reasoning of any intelligent Christian, when opposing the claim that natural religion is sufficient to purify and save the soul: he would suppose himself wholly under the influence of that system, and then show its utter insufficiency to overcome his moral depravity and procure his peace and pardon with God. If asked, "Do you really speak now of your present moral character?" he would reply, "No: I speak of myself as what I am by nature, and what I should have for ever remained, but for the grace of the gospel, which your system rejects." In his argument, then, with a Jew, tenacious of the law, and hostile to the gospel, Paul tells us what he was by nature, and what every enlightened, convicted sinner is, who overlooks the grace of the gospel, and labors to obtain a righteousness with God by the deeds of the law.

At all events, the *Christian experience*, if indeed it can possibly be such, of the seventh chapter of Romans is very far below the triumphant experience of the eighth. Would it not be well, then, for the ministers of Jesus Christ to exhort his professed followers with all faithfulness to get out of the bondage described in the former, in which the great majority of them now apparently are, and get into the "glorious liberty" described in the latter? Would it not be more to the glory of Christ's grace, to speak triumphantly of his power to deliver the soul from the bondage of sin and bring it into the glorious liberty of the children of God? As there are those who have a name to live and are dead, so

there are those who profess to be in the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit, who still live after the flesh; those who are called the children of God, who yet are the servants of sin. Let us then all apply to Christ, as Paul did, and live by faith upon him; and then shall we be able to declare to the eternal glory of God's grace, that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death;" for this is truly the inheritance of the saints, and "their salvation is of me, saith the Lord."

I will close with a single reflection of the pious Doddridge upon this important subject. "Let us remember the grand purpose for which God sent his Son in the likeness of our sinful flesh; that he might condemn sin in our flesh; and that he might enable us to do execution on sin as a condemned malefactor. In his name, therefore, let us pursue the victory; and, rejecting every overture of accommodation, with determined zeal to do justice upon it; and may what we have been reading establish our resolution of walking, not *after the flesh but after the Spirit*, since we are now delivered from the curse of a broken law, and blessed with a dispensation so properly called *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*: a dispensation, by attending to the peculiarities of which, we may be enabled to extend our conquests over sin in the most effectual manner, and to attain heights of virtue and piety to which no legal considerations and motives alone could raise us."

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

#### SELECT THOUGHTS FROM LEIGHTON.

Thou shalt be sure to be assaulted by Satan, when thou hast received the greatest enlargements from Heaven — either at the sacrament, or in prayer, or in any other way; then look for an onset. This arch pirate lets the empty ships pass, but lays wait for them when they return richest laden.

When God *awakes* his children and makes them *rise*, this is a probable sign that it is near day. I mean, when he stirs them up to more than usual hopes, and prayers, and endeavors, it is very likely that he intends them some special good.

That flower which follows the sun, doth so even in cloudy days, when it doth not shine forth; yet it follows the hidden course and motion of it. So the soul that moves after God, keeps that course when he hides his face; yea, is glad at his will in all estates, or conditions, or events.



Little sins prove, usually, introductions to greater sins. Admit but some inordinate desire into your heart, that you account a small matter, and it is a hundred to one but it shall prove a little thief got in to open the door to a number of greater.

There is a great deal of spiritual art and skill in dealing with another's sin. It requires much spirituality of mind, and much prudence, and much love; a mind clear from passion, for that blinds the eye and makes the hand rough, so that a man neither rightly sees nor rightly handles the sore he is about to cure; and many are lost through the ignorance and neglect of that due temper which is to be brought to this work. Men think otherwise; that their rigors are much spirituality; but they mistake it.

Let not your falling short of these models and results, nor your daily manifold imperfections and faults, dishearten you; but continue stedfast in your desires, purposes and endeavors: and even ask the best, aim at the best, and hope the best, being sorry that you can do no better, and they shall be a most acceptable sacrifice in the sight of God, and in due time you shall reap if you faint not.

Consider Jesus, the redeemer and husband of thy soul, and walk with him as becomes a chaste spouse, with reverence and lowly shamefulness, obedience and submission.

Offer all that thou hast, to be nothing, to use nothing of all that thou hast about thee and is called thine, but to his honor and glory; and resolve, through his grace, to use all the powers of thy soul, and every member of thy body, to his service, as formerly thou hast done to sin.

Thou must submit and give thyself up unto the discipline of Jesus, and become his scholar, resigning and compelling thyself altogether to obey him in all things; so that thy willing thou utterly and perfectly do cast away from thee, and do nothing without his license. At every word thou wilt speak, at every morsel thou wilt eat, at every stirring or moving of every article or member of thy body, thou must ask leave of him in thy heart; and ask thyself whether, having so done, that be according to his will and holy example, and with sincere intention of his glory.

Thou must keep thy memory clean and pure, as it were a wedlock chamber, from all strange thoughts, fancies and imaginations; and it must be trimmed and adorned with holy meditations and virtues of Christ's life and passion, that God may continually and ever rest therein.

Mortify all affection to and seeking of thyself, which is so natural to men in all the good they desire and in all the evil they suffer; yea, by the inordinate love of the gifts and graces of God, instead of himself, they fall into spiritual pride, gluttony and greediness.

Solitude, silence, and the strict keeping of the heart, are the foundations and grounds of a spiritual life.

Do all thy necessary and outward works without any trouble and carefulness of mind, and bear thy mind amidst all always inwardly lifted up and

elevated to God, following always more the inward exercise of love than the outward acts of virtue.

The pure love of God maketh the spirit pure and simple; and so free, that without any pain and labor, it can at all times turn and recollect itself in God.

Mortify all affection towards inward, sensible, spiritual delight in grace, and the following devotion with sensible sweetness in the lower faculties or powers of the soul, which are nowise real sanctity and holiness in themselves, but certain gifts of God to help our infirmity.

Mortify all curious investigation or search; all speculation and knowledge of unnecessary things, human or divine; for the perfect life of a Christian consisteth not in a high knowledge, but profound meekness, in holy simplicity, and in the ardent love of God.

P. L. U.

#### SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

SIR,—When I told you that, in all ages, Jehovah Jesus manifests himself in a peculiar manner to his people, you exclaimed against the assertion as altogether new and unscriptural. It lies upon me, therefore, to prove that antiquity and Scripture are on my side. I shall, then, in this letter, appeal to the manifestations recorded in the Old Testament. You cannot expect all the revelations of any child of God, much less those of every one, to be mentioned in so short a history as that of the Bible. Nevertheless, enough is said on the point to convince us that, in every age of the church, God hath favored the sons of men with peculiar displays of his presence.

Let us go back as far as Adam himself. Did not the Lord familiarly converse with him before the fall, both when he presented him a partner and when he brought every beast of the field before him to see what he would call them? Did he not visit him after the fall to pronounce his sentence, and to promise that he would become the woman's seed and bruise the serpent's head? Was not this manifestation granted to Abel, when the Lord had respect to his sacrifice, the very cause of Cain's envy, wrath and murder? Did not Enoch's walking with God imply a constant union and communion with Emmanuel? And how could this union have taken place, if the Lord had not first revealed himself to the patriarch? Must not two persons meet and agree, before they can walk and converse together?

"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and in conse-



quence of it was made acquainted with his righteous designs, and received directions how to escape from a perishing world. The history of Abraham is full of accounts of such manifestations. In one of them the Lord called him out of his sins, and from his kindred, to go both to the heavenly and earthly Canaan. In others he promised him Isaac, and Isaac's mysterious seed. Several years after, for the trial of his faith, he commanded him to sacrifice that favorite son; and when the trial was over, he testified his approbation of Abraham's conduct. He went farther. Read Gen. xviii. and you will see how the divine philanthropy or the love of God toward man appeared, in his condescending to clothe himself, beforehand, with the nature he was to assume in the virgin's womb, and to converse, in this undress, with the Father of the faithful as a prince with his favorite, or a friend with his confidant.

Sarah and Agar, Isaac and Rebekah, had their divine manifestations; but those of Jacob deserve our particular attention. When he fled to Syria from the face of his brother Esau, and lay desolate in a field, having only a heap of stones for his pillow, the God of all consolation appeared unto him: "And behold, the Lord stood on the mysterious ladder, on which the angels of God ascended and descended, and said, I am the Lord; behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places, whither thou goest. And Jacob called that place Bethel, the house of God, and the gate of heaven:" as if he had wanted to intimate, no one ever found the gate of heaven but by a manifestation of Christ, who is alone the way to the Father, and the door into glory. When the same patriarch returned to Canaan, and was left alone one night, there wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day. And when this extraordinary person said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh; he replied, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me; and he blessed him there, acknowledging that he had power with man and God," even with him whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, [the face of God,] for he said, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." The design of this manifestation was merely to strengthen his faith, and we learn from it, that the children of faithful Abraham wrestle in prayer with the God-man, as Jacob did, till they prevail and are blessed as he was.

Moses was favored with numberless manifestations, sometimes as prime minister of the King of the Jews, and at other times only as a common believer. "There appeared to him, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush; and when Moses saw it, he drew near, and the voice of

the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers," &c. Acts vii. 30. Many partook of a sight equally glorious: "Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, went up and saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness; and upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God and did eat and drink." Exod. xxiv. 10, 11. "Behold, (said Moses upon the occasion,) the Lord our God hath showed us his glory, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire, and we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth." Deut. v. 24. All Israel shared sometimes in the glorious manifestation. "They all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, (says St. Paul,) and that rock was Christ." The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, says the Jewish historian, and fire was upon it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel. "It came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar ascended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses, and all the people saw the cloudy pillar, and rose up and worshipped, every man in the door of his tent. And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." So indulgent was Emmanuel to him, that when he said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory, the Lord answered, I will make my goodness pass before thee; but thou canst not see my face [without some veil] and live. And [O astonishing condescension!] the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And Moses made haste, bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped." These displays of divine goodness and glory left a divine impression on the countenance of the man of God; his face shone so transcendently glorious, that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him; and he was obliged to put a veil over it, before he could converse with him. Though this appears very extraordinary, the apostles inform us that what happened to the countenance of Moses, happens to the souls of believers. By faith they behold the Lord through the glass of gospel promises, and beholding him they "are made partakers of the divine nature: they are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

Joshua, Moses' successor, was blessed with many such manifestations, each of which conveyed to him new degrees of courage and wisdom. To instance in one only: "When he was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand.



And Joshua went to him, and said, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as Captain of the Lord's host am I come. And Joshua [sensible it was Jehovah] fell on his face to the earth, worshipped, and said to him, What says my Lord to his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground; and Joshua did so." Josh. v. 13. Every true discovery of Christ hath a similar effect. It humbles the sinner, and makes him worship in the dust. He sees "holiness to the Lord" written upon every surrounding object; he is loosed from earth and earthly things, and the towering walls of sin fall before him, as those of Jericho, soon after this manifestation, did before Joshua.

When that chief was dead, the same heavenly person, called "the angel of the Lord, came from Gilgal to Bochim," and spake such words to all the children of Israel, that the people were universally melted; "they lift up their voice, wept," and sacrificed. Judges ii. 1. Nothing can so effectually make sinners relent as a sight of him whom they have pierced. When they have it, whatever place they are in becomes a Bochim, a valley of tears and adoration.

Not long after, the Lord manifested himself to Deborah; and by the wisdom and fortitude communicated to her in that revelation, she was enabled to judge Israel, and lead desponding Barak to certain victory, through nine hundred chariots of iron.

The condescension of our Emmanuel appears in a still more striking light in the manifestation which he vouchsafed to Gideon. This mysterious "angel of the Lord [again and again called Jehovah] came and sat under an oak in Ophra," appeared to Gideon, and said, "The Lord is with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And the Lord looked upon him, [what a courage-inspiring look was this! as powerful, no doubt, as that which met cursing Peter's eye and darted repentance to his heart!] and he said, Go in this thy might; have not I sent thee? And Gideon said, Alas! O Lord God, for because I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die." Thus strengthened and comforted, he built an altar to Jehovah-Shalom, and threw down the altar of Baal. Judges vi. 12, &c. Hence we learn that when Jesus manifests himself to a sinner, he fills him with a noble contempt of Baal, an effectual resolution to break down his altars, and a divine courage to shake off the yoke of the spiritual Midianites. He imparts to him a comfortable assurance that the bitterness of death is past, and that "Je-

hovah-Shalom, the god of peace, even Christ our peace," is with him; and the sinner, constrained by the love of Christ, gives him his believing heart, and offers sacrifices of thanksgiving on that best of altars. Here begins such a free intercourse between the Lord and Gideon, only of a far more spiritual and delightful nature.

Some years after, the same angel of God appeared to Manoah's wife, and promised her a son. Her husband prayed for the same manifestation—God hearkened to his voice. The heavenly personage manifested himself a second time. Manoah asked him his name, and the "angel said to him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret?" I am not yet called Jesus. Manoah offered a burnt offering, the angel received it at his hands; and while he ascended in the flame of the altar, Manoah fell on his face to the ground, knew that he was the angel Jehovah, and said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." She comforted him under his fears; and the birth of Sampson, instead of their death, was the consequence of this twofold manifestation.

There was a time when Samuel did not yet "know the Lord; neither was the word of the Lord," that word which was afterward made flesh, yet revealed unto him. The devoted youth worshipped in the dark, till "the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, came, stood, and called, Samuel, Samuel; for the Lord revealed himself to him there by the word of the Lord." From that memorable time the "Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." The intercourse between God and his prophet soon grew to so great a degree, that the sacred historian says, "The Lord told him in his ear" what he wanted him to be informed of. 1 Sam. iii. 7; ix. 17.

David had many manifestations of Christ and his pardoning love; and, far from supposing this blessing peculiar to himself as a prophet, he declares that "for this every one that is godly shall pray to God, when he may be found." Psalm xxxii. 6. He knew his shepherd's inward voice so well that, without it, no outward message, though ever so comfortable, could restore peace to his troubled mind. When he had been convinced of his crimes of adultery and murder, by the close application of Nathan's parable, the prophet assured him that the Lord had "put away his sin, he should not die." This report would have contented many of our modern penitents; but nothing short of an immediate manifestation of the forgiving God could comfort the royal mourner: "Wash thou me, (says he,) and I shall be clean." Nathan's words, though ever so true, cannot do this: speak thy-



self, merciful God; "make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

Exceeding remarkable was the revelation his son Solomon was favored with. "In Gibeon, [where he was gone to sacrifice,] the Lord appeared unto him in a dream by night, and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." Conscious of his greatest want, "he asked an understanding heart. The speech pleased the Lord, and God said, Because thou hast asked this thing, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given it thee; and that also which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor." Though this promise was made to him in a dream, he knew by the change which he found in himself when he awoke, and by the powerful evidence which accompanies divine manifestations, that it was a glorious reality. Fully persuaded of it, he scrupled not to offer peace offerings, and make a feast to all his servants on the occasion. 1 Kings iii. Nor was this the only time Solomon was thus favored. When he had built the temple, and prayed for a blessing upon it, "the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon, and said, I have heard thy prayer." 1 Kings ix. 2.

Elijah is so famous for the power he had to obtain divine manifestations by the prayer of faith, that St. James proposes him to the Church for a pattern of successful wrestling with God. And who is the Lord God of Elijah but the God that manifests himself to his worshippers, in opposition to Baal and other false gods, from whom neither visits nor answers can be obtained? The Lord answered him by fire at the foot of Mount Carmel, and by showers on the top; and when he lodged in Mount Horeb in a cave, "behold, the word of the Lord came to him and said, What dost thou here, Elijah?" "Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord." "And behold, the Lord passed by;" and in his still, small voice, comforted, supported and directed him. 1 Kings xix. 9.

Micaiah, another man of God, "saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left." 1 Kings xxii. 19. Elisha was not only blessed with frequent manifestations of the Lord and his power, but of his heavenly retinue also. He saw in an hour of danger "the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire," ready to protect him; and at his request the Lord condescended to open his servant's eyes, that his drooping spirits might revive at the sight. 2 Kings vi. 17.

Eliphaz, one of Job's friends, related to him that "in thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear and

trembling came upon him. Then a spirit passed before his face; it stood still, but he could not discern [i. e. clearly distinguish] the form thereof. An image was before his face, and he heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more pure than God?" As for Job, when he had long contended with his friends, the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind, and manifested himself in a manner to which the good man was before a stranger. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job xxxvii. 1, and xlii. 5. Hence we learn that nothing but a discovery of the Lord can silence the vain reasonings of self righteous pleas and unbelieving fears: this alone makes us to lie in deep prostration at our Maker's feet.

St. John informs us that "Isaiah saw Christ's glory, and spake of him," when he described the glorious manifestation in which he received a new seal of pardoning and sanctifying love. "I saw the Lord," says he, "sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up; his train filled the temple. The seraphim, covering their faces with their wings, cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." "Then flew one of the seraphim, and touching me with a live coal from off the altar," he said, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Isa. vi. 1, &c. Many never witness the forgiveness of their sins till they see by faith the Lord of hosts, and are melted into repentance, and inflamed with love at the glorious sight. Isaiah not only beheld Christ's glory, but was blessed with the clearest views of his sufferings. He saw him as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs;" and asked him "Why he was red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?" These revelations were not only calculated for the good of the church, but also for the establishment of the prophet's faith.

I shall not mention those of Ezekiel; they are so numerous that a particular account of them would alone fill a letter. I refer you to the book itself. Jeremiah, speaking of God's people, says, in express terms, The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah xxxi. 3. Daniel enjoyed the same favor. "He saw the Ancient of days, and one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven." We may naturally suppose that Daniel's three companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were sensible of their



heavenly Deliverer's presence. They were more concerned in the discovery than Nebuchadnezzar, who cried out, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

It would be absurd to suppose that the lesser prophets and other men of God to whom the word of the Lord came had no discovery of the Lord himself, the essential Word. If some display of his presence had not attended their every revelation, might they not have said, Thus says my warm imagination — thus says my enthusiastic brain, as well as, Thus saith the Lord?

From the variety and authenticity of these manifestations left upon sacred record, I conclude that the doctrine I maintain, far from being new and unscriptural, is supported by the experiences of God's children for 3600 years, viz., from the creation of the world till the close of the Old Testament.

With respect to what is extraordinary, as to the design, and barely external, as to the circumstances of some of these manifestations, I refer you to the distinctions I made on that subject in my second letter. Should you object, that the contents of this prove only that God favored the patriarchs and Jews with immediate revelations of himself, because they had neither the gospel nor the Scriptures: I answer,

1. The gospel was preached to them as well as to us. The patriarchs had tradition, which answered the end of the Scriptures in their day. The Jews, in the time of the judges had not only tradition, but a considerable part of the Scriptures, even all the writings of Moses. Under the kings they had the Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, the Proverbs, and a thousand and five songs of Solomon, one of which only has been handed down to our times. They had also the book of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer, which are now lost. These contained the substance of the Bible.

2. When the Lord answered Saul no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams, the reason assigned for it by the Holy Ghost is, not that the canon of Scripture was filled, and there was no more occasion for immediate revelations; but that "the Lord was departed from him," and was become his enemy.

3. David, who had the honor of being a sacred writer himself, after his relapse into sin, could not be satisfied with the psalms he had penned down, but mourned, prayed, and watered his bed with his tears, inconsolable till the Lord immediately revealed his pardoning love, and said to his soul, "I am thy salvation."

4. If, because we have the letter of Scripture, we must be deprived of all immediate manifestations of Christ and his Spirit,

we are great losers by that blessed book, and we might reasonably say, "Lord, bring us back to the dispensation of Moses. Thy Jewish servants could formerly converse with thee face to face, but now we can know nothing of thee but by their writings. They viewed thy glory in various wonderful appearances, but we are indulged with only black lines, telling us of thy glory. They had the bright shekinah, and we have only obscure descriptions of it. They were blessed with lively oracles, and we only with a dead letter. The ark of thy covenant went before them, and struck terror into all their adversaries; but a book, of which our enemies make daily sport, is the only revelation of thy power among us. They make their boast of *Urim and Thummim*, and received particular, immediate answers from between the cherubim; but we have only general ones, by means of Hebrew and Greek writings, which many do not understand. They conversed familiarly with Moses, their mediator; with Aaron, their high priest; and Samuel, their prophet: these holy men gave them unerring directions in doubtful cases; but, alas! the apostles and inspired men are all dead, and thou, Jesus, our Mediator, Priest and Prophet, canst not be consulted to any purpose, for thou manifestest thyself no more. As for thy sacred book, thou knowest that sometimes the want of money to purchase it, the want of learning to consult the original, the want of wisdom to understand the translation, the want of skill or sight to read it, prevent our improving it to the best advantage, and keep some from reaping any benefit from it at all. O Lord, if because we have this blessed picture of thee, we must have no discovery of the glorious original, have compassion on us, take back thy precious book, and impart thy more precious self to us as thou didst to thine ancient people."

5. St. Paul declares, though the Mosaic dispensation was "glorious," that of Christ "exceeds it in glory." But if Christ revealed himself immediately to the Jews, and to Christians only mediately by the letter of a book, it is plain the apostle was mistaken; for no one can deny it is far more glorious to see the light of God's countenance and hear his voice, than merely to read something about them in a book.

6. That particular manifestations of Christ, far from ceasing with the Jewish, have increased in brightness and spirituality under the Christian dispensation, I shall endeavor to prove in my next.

I am, sir, &c.,

JOHN FLETCHER.



"THE WAY OF HOLINESS."

SECTION V.

"Let us, to perfect love restored,  
Thine image here retrieve,  
And in the presence of our Lord,  
The life of angels live.

But is it possible that I  
Should live and sin no more?  
Lord, if on thee I dare rely,  
The *faith* shall bring the power."

She now saw that holiness, instead of being an attainment beyond her reach, was a state of grace, in which every one of the Lord's redeemed ones should live—that the service was indeed a "reasonable service," inasmuch as the command, "Be ye holy," is founded upon the absolute right which God, as our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, has upon the *entire* service of his creatures.

Instead of perceiving any thing meritorious in what she had been enabled, through grace, to do, i. e. in laying all upon the altar, she saw that she had but rendered back to God that which was already his own.

She looked upon family, influence, earthly possessions, &c., and chidingly, in view of former misappropriation, said to her heart, "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if received, why didst thou ever glory in them as of thine own begetting?" And though with Abraham in the sacrifice of his beloved Isaac, she was called seemingly to sacrifice that of all earthly objects surpassingly dear, yet so truly did she now see that the "Giver of every good gift" but rightfully required his *own* in his *own time*, that she could only say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

And O, what cause for deep and perpetual abasement before God did she now perceive, in that she had so long kept back part of that price which, by the requirement of the blessed word, she now so clearly discerned infinite love had demanded; and when the inquiries were presented, "Is God unreasonable in his requirements? Hath he given the command, 'Be ye holy,' and not given the ability with the command, for the performance of it?" her inmost soul, penetrated with a sense of past unfaithfulness, acknowledged not only the reasonableness of the command.

but also the unreasonableness of not having lived in obedience to such a plain Scriptural requirement.

With a depth of feeling not before apprehended, she could now heartily respond to the sentiment,

"I loathe myself when Christ I see,  
And into nothing fall,  
Content if God exalted be,  
And Christ be *all* in *all*."

Never before did she so deeply realize the truth of the words, "For we have received the sentence of *death* in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in Him that raiseth the dead." With poverty of spirit her heart was constantly giving utterance to its emotions with the poet—

"Thou all our works in us hast wrought,  
Our good is all divine,  
The praise of every virtuous thought  
And righteous act is thine."

And when (as she still continued in a waiting attitude before the Lord) the Spirit appealed to her understanding thus, "Through what power have you been enabled thus to present yourself a living sacrifice to God?" her heart replied, "Through the power of God. I could no more have brought myself to this point, but through faith in God, believing it to be his requirement, than I could have created a world!" Immediately the Spirit suggested, "If God has enabled you to bring it, will he not, now that you bring it and lay it on his altar, accept it at your hands?" She now, indeed, began to feel that all things were ready! and in thrilling anticipation, began to say, "Thou *wilt* receive me! yes, thou *wilt* receive me!" And still she felt that something was wanting. "But *when* and *how* shall I *know* that thou *dost* receive me?" said the importunate language of her heart. The Spirit presented the declaration of the written word in reply, "Now is the accepted time." Still her insatiable desires were unsatisfied; and yet she continued to wait with unutterable importunity of desire and longing expectation, looking upward for the coming of the Lord; while the Spirit still continued to urge the Scriptural declarations, "'Now is the accepted time.' I will receive you. Only believe! Venture all *now* and *for ever* upon the faithfulness of the IMMUTABLE WORD, and you are *now* and *for ever* the saved of the Lord!" And now an increase of light, in reference to the sacredness and immutability of the word of God, burst upon her soul! An assurance that the Holy Scripture is,



in verity, the WORD OF THE LORD, and as immutable in its nature as the *throne of the Eternal*, assumed the vividness and vitality of TRUTH, in a manner that she had never before realized.

These views were given in answer to an inquiry that rose in her mind, thus—“Shall I *venture* upon these declarations without *previously* realizing a change sufficient to warrant such conclusions? Venture *now*, merely because they stand thus recorded in the *written word*!” She here perceived that the declarations of Scripture were as truly the WORD OF THE LORD to her soul, as though they were proclaimed from the holy mount in the voice of thunder, or blazoned across the vault of heaven in characters of flame. She now saw into the simplicity of faith in a manner that astonished and humbled her soul; astonished that she had not before perceived it, and humbled because she had been so slow of heart to believe God. The perceptions of faith and its effect that then took possession of her mind were these: *Faith is taking God at his word*, relying unwaveringly upon his truth. The nature of the truth believed, whether joyous or otherwise, will necessarily produce corresponding feeling. Yet, *faith* and *feeling* are two distinct objects, though so nearly allied.

Here she saw an error which, during her former pilgrimage in the heavenly way, had been detrimental to her progress. She now perceived that she had been much more solicitous about *feeling* than *faith*—requiring *feeling*, the fruit of faith, previous to having exercised faith.

And now, on discerning the way more clearly, she was enabled by the help of the Spirit to resolve that she *would take God at his word*, whatever her emotions might be. Here she was permitted to linger for a moment, to count the cost of living a life of faith on the Son of God. The question was presented, “Suppose, after you *have* ventured upon the bare declaration of God—resolved to believe that *as you venture upon his word he doth receive you just because* he hath said, ‘I will receive you,’—and then should perceive no change, no extraordinary evidence, or emotion, to confirm your faith, would you still believe?” The answer that presented from the word was, “*The just shall live by faith.*”

She now came to the decision that if called to live *peculiarly* the life of faith, and denied all outward or inward manifestations to an extent before unheard of, with the exception of him who “journeyed” onward in obedience to the command of “God, not knowing whither he went,” that she would still, through the power of the Almighty, who has said, “*Walk* before me, and be

thou perfect," journey onward through the pilgrimage of life — *walking by faith* — resolved that the shield of faith should *never* be relinquished, but retained even with the unyielding grasp of death, should the powers of darkness be permitted to assail even thus formidably. Never can the important step that followed be forgotten in time or in eternity.

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SECTION VI.

"He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform."—*The Word of God.*

"Faith in thy power thou seest I have,  
For thou this faith hast wrought,  
Ead souls thou callest from the grave,  
And speakest worlds from nought.

In hope against all human hope,  
Self-desperate, I believe,  
Thy quickening word shall raise me up,  
Thou shalt thy Spirit give.

The thing surpasses all my thought,  
But faithful is my Lord,  
Through unbelief I stagger not,  
For God hath spoke the word."

From the preceding views she discerned clearly, that *one* more step must be taken ere she had tested fully the faithfulness of God. "Faithful is he who hath called you, who also *will* do it," was now no longer a matter of opinion, but a truth confidently believed, and she now saw that she must relinquish the confident expression before indulged in, as premising something in the *future*, "Thou *wilt* receive me," for the yet more confident expression, implying *present* assurance, "Thou *dost* receive!" It is, perhaps, almost needless to say, that the enemy who had heretofore endeavored to withstand every step of the Spirit's leadings, now, with much greater energy, withstood; the suggestion that it was strangely presumptuous to believe in such a way, was presented with a plausibility which only Satanic subtilty could invent; but the resolution to believe had passed; and then the Spirit most inspiringly said to her heart, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

And now realizing that she was engaged in a transaction eternal in its consequences, she here, in the strength, and as in



the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and those spirits that minister to the heirs of salvation, said, "O, Lord, I now call heaven and earth to witness that I *now lay body, soul, and spirit, with all these redeemed powers, upon thine altar, to be for ever THINE!* 'Tis DONE! Thou hast promised to receive me! Thou canst not be unfaithful! *Thou dost receive me now!* From this time henceforth *I am thine—wholly thine!*"

The enemy suggested, "'Tis but the work of your own understanding—the effort of your own will." But the Spirit of the Lord raised up a standard which Satan with his combined forces could not overthrow. It was by the following presentation of truth that the Spirit helped her infirmities. "Do not your perceptions of right—even your *own understanding*—assure you that it is matter of *thanksgiving to God* that you have been thus enabled to present your all to him?" "Yes," responded her whole heart, "it has been all the work of the Spirit. I will praise Him. Glory be to God in the highest! Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory, honor, and blessing! Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Yes, thou dost reign unrivalled in my heart! Thou hast subdued all things to thyself, and now thou dost reign throughout the empire of my soul, the Lord God of every motion!" The Spirit now bore full testimony to her spirit, of the TRUTH OF THE WORD! She felt in experimental verity that it was not in vain that she had believed; her very existence seemed lost and swallowed up in God; and she seemed plunged, as it were, into an immeasurable ocean of love, light, and power, and realized that she was encompassed with the "favor of the Almighty as with a shield, and felt assured, while she continued thus to rest her entire being on the faithfulness of God, she might confidently stand rejoicing in hope," and exultingly, with the poet, assure her heart—

"My steadfast soul, from falling free,  
Shall now no longer rove,  
But Christ be all in all to me,  
And all my soul be LOVE."

She now saw infinite *propriety, comprehensiveness, and beauty*, in those words of DIVINE *origin* from which she had before indulged a shrinking, as implying a state too high and sacred for ordinary attainment or expectation.

HOLINESS, SANCTIFICATION, *perfect love*, were now no longer so incomprehensible, or indefinite in nature or bearing, in relation to the individual experience of the Lord's redeemed ones. She wondered not that it should be said, in reference to the

"WAY OF HOLINESS," "*The ransomed of the Lord shall walk there!*" She now perceived that these terms were most significantly expressive of a state of soul in which *every* believer should live, and felt that no words of mere earthly origin could embody to her own perceptions, or convey to the understanding of others, half the comprehensiveness of meaning contained in these significant expressions, which stand forth so prominently in the word of God, thereby assuring men that they are given by the express dictation of the Holy Spirit.

She now thought of her former peculiar scruples in reference to the *use* of these words of divine origin, as in a degree partaking of the sin of Uzzah, implying, as she now clearly discerned, an *unwarrantable* carefulness about the ark of God, as though infinite wisdom had not devised the most *proper mode of expression*, for she well remembered how often her heart had risen against these expressions, as objectionable, when she had heard other travellers in the "way of holiness" use these terms as expressive of the state of grace into which the Lord had brought them; the very same words which she now saw were infinitely expressive of the state into which the Lord had brought *her own soul*.

But she now felt such a mighty increase of confidence in God, that she hesitated not in trusting the entire management of his own cause in his own hands, and was willing, ay, even desirous, to become an instrument through which he might show forth his power to save unto the uttermost; desirous to be accounted of no reputation — to be but as a "*voice*" to sound forth the praise of the "Almighty to save;" willing that the instrument should be despised and rejected, only so that the voice of God be heard, and the Savior honored and accepted.— *Ch. Adv. and Jour.*

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

#### SOUL AT REST.

My soul enjoys an unbroken repose, since it has made the true God its resting place. And this, it seems to me, comprehends all other expressions of peace, satisfaction and safety, which possibly can be made. To me it was not a small thing to be put to rest, such a rest as that upon which my mind now dwells, after years of oppressive disquietude. An unsettled purpose was the



demon which haunted me from my earliest recollection to the age of nineteen. I do not mean to say that I was troubled with fickleness of mind as to temporal interests, or instability of purpose as to living a Christian in the common view of that character. My perturbation was deeply internal; usually hidden from sight and hearing. The unchangeable God was not my *all*. I was sensible of an inclination to help satisfy the spiritual cravings from other and lower sources than the infinite Fountain; and I was always hearing a voice, at the same time, crying against this inclination. Alone or in company, at leisure or busily employed, it was the same. At no time was I released from the painful sense of competition within the soul. Overwhelming gratitude almost drinks up expression, while I compare the present with the past, and see how great is the change with me. As soon as my heart made its choice to be governed entirely and for ever, by the King eternal, my whole incorporeal nature experienced a change; the soul had fixed itself in one purpose; though months intervened before I found that this blessed Sovereign had made himself a throne in my heart. During these months my mind, my entire being, was in one unceasing exercise of offering itself to its Maker; constantly struggling to return to its source of life—to its God. In this state there was rest, compared to the tossings with which I had all my life before been afflicted; but it was only the repose of settled purpose, of consecration, and not the rest of faith. The rest of faith was at length given, including with its own blessedness the tranquillity of love. But we are sometimes asked if this repose is not inappropriate to our present state of probation—"warfare." We answer, it is the farthest possible from being inappropriate. We beg to know when the mind can have greater need of such a rest than it now has, while constantly feeling the influence of a diseased body with which it is connected, and through the organization of which it must hear the tumults and behold the corruptions of this fallen world? We believe no candid person can question the fitness of this quietude to our present state, after he has once been made to understand what it is. We do not mean a dormant, inactive state of mind; neither an insensibility to the demands made upon us for exertion, nor a disinclination to put forth that exertion. The soul at rest in God has the keenest sensibilities to every thing aside from a selfish interest, and is ever upon the alert to obey the promptings of a pure and quickened conscience. In stating what this rest is not, and in collateral remarks, we have in purport stated what it is. We mean to say, it is the consciousness of having God the

central point, for all the operations of the mind and movements of the heart; and the receiving through the channel of faith constant refreshings from the river of life, in just such draughts as the wisdom and goodness of the divine Spirit lead him to measure to thirsty souls. The soul in this rest is always saying, "All things work together for good to me; all is well—all is well." Observers may think me afflicted when my body trembles under suffering, and my dearest friends are torn from me; they think it a sore trouble to me to receive curses from my fellow creatures when I deserve their blessing; but in any, or all of these, I cannot find a whisper in my heart which says, my lot is hard. If these are afflictions, they are enclosed in blessings, and comforts are concealed in the very heart of them. They are permitted to come upon me by Him whose I am, for I am not my own. My Father has the care of whatever comes upon me, therefore I have no room for worry. It may be asked if this state of serenity necessarily implies perfect love to God. We think it does; for without a total abandonment of self, and an entire devotedness and resignation to God, there cannot be this perfect rest in him. But, we hear it objected, there are persons who profess to be entirely consecrated, and yet appear more disturbed at the conflicting circumstances which surround them, than do others of no such profession. The truth of this statement we acknowledge; and it is a just inference, that he who is disconcerted with excitement when his favorite plans are broken, his personal repute infringed upon, or his expectations cut off, has not his heart and mind settled in God; he has not given all to his disposal; for, had he done so, he would be ready to say, Perhaps my plans had better be broken, for I have not foresight sufficient to insure the propriety of their standing. As to my reputation, that is not for me to see to, after having done my duty; for it is nothing to me, only so far as my heavenly Father sees fit to give me favor in the eyes of my fellow mortals for some important purpose; and my expectations are not much; it suffices for me that I have a *present* God. Satan often tempts the consecrated heart to agitation; and in no form does he so effectually conceal *himself* as in this. He so presents circumstances and produces arguments, as to distort the real picture of the case, making it all look very reasonable, and calling for interest and action, lest this, or that, or some other evil, shall arise in consequence of inattention to it. He who is taken in the snare will run hither and thither, laboring to gain such and such a point, using many words, showing much zeal, which had better, a thousand times, never have entered into the



heart of the man, or been witnessed by others. We know there are believers in present sanctification who advocate what they see fit to call the *duty* of "proper resentment;" and this (say they) will lead one to show some *spirit* in taking care of his own cause. If "proper resentment" be our duty, and there must be spirit exhibited in it, let that resentment be such as is proper for him who is dead to self and petty selfish interests, and who has faith enough in God to believe that he will take care of the honor of his own name. Let the spirit shown be that of the lamb—the Lamb of God, who took no care to plead his own cause by zealous words and active efforts. There are those who with sorrow testify that the temptation to agitation has a long chain of other temptations linked to it, which are sure of getting entrance into the heart, if the first be but yielded to; if the mind do but get confused. So clear does this connection of temptations appear to me, that I would fly from the first one as from the face of a serpent. If our arch Deceiver be narrowly watched, he will frequently be found to be, in a very wily manner, making an effort for the disturbance of the mind, merely as a preparation for further operations. And so bent is he upon his purpose, that if we forbid him access through the day, by constantly fleeing to Jesus and getting a rebuke to the tempest, he will renew his efforts as soon as the senses are locked in sleep, and the will ceases its ordinary action. Not only once, but twice and thrice have I awaked in the same night under the strongest temptation to let loose the reins of thought which the Maker of the mind has given it the responsibility of holding, and enter upon such imaginations as must have thrown me into restlessness and perplexity. I am so sure that this is not a mere fancy, that it seems important to me, in arranging the points for watchfulness, to see what degree of composure or what approach to disquietude my mind is in upon first waking from sleep, as a starting point: and if it seem at all disposed to disturbance, I would not wish or dare to leave my bedside until by faith I had heard the Omnipotent voice saying again and again, "*Peace — peace.*" It is certain that he who exhibits the most settled and unvarying composure of mind, does most clearly and strikingly reflect the image of his God; and he who loves ardently that image, and seeks to bear it, will not fail to keep his eye upon that feature of it. I have heard a holy man frequently say, "I can never think of God as in a state of agitation; the thought is revolting to me." Those who are acquainted with this good man are ready to conclude that he lives and acts in the light of the argument, — God is never found in a state of confusion, there-

fore I must never be. It was said by an observer of this calm spirited man, "*I can never see him without thinking of God.*" This remark does indeed illustrate the influence felt from the example of those who rest in God and bear his image. How little assimilation to his Maker does that man bear who permits himself to be thrown into a state of excitability and distraction when his purposes are disregarded, or his laws broken, whether they be little or great! Surely he could not forbear blushing should he thoughtfully turn his eye to Him who sits in the heavens, *the same* yesterday, to-day and for ever, having in his view all the while the hearts and actions of rebellious angels and wicked men. Should not a mortal bow in the dust and exclaim, Cannot I, who am all unworthiness, bear a few contradictions from my fellow mortals without such uneasiness, when Omnipotence in all his holiness bears *all manner* of contradiction from sinners of every description with a composure as deep as his majesty is high! God is perfectly happy in himself, for he is perfectly composed within himself. Man may be perfectly happy in his God, for he may be perfectly settled and at rest in him. We are confident that the happiness of the mind varies as the permanency of its rest in the Father of spirits varies; the more inclined to discomposure, the less happy; the less inclined to discomposure, the more happy. Here we see the blessedness of having a centre for the mind, a resting place for the soul. Who can think of enduring the scene when the earth shall reel to and fro, and the heavens be rolled together as a scroll? He who rests in God. *There is rest for*

A STUDENT.

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#### MRS. FLETCHER.

The following testimony to the excellent Christian character of Mrs. Fletcher, is from Mrs. Hawkes, a lady who was an honored member of Mr. Cecil's church, and a bright and shining light among the female Christians of her day. It is found in the "Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hawkes," a book which should be in the hands of all our readers.—*Ed. Lad. Rep.*

Mrs. Jones and myself set out for Madeley, Thursday, May 15, 1794. We had a pleasant drive, but lost much time on the road, for which we suffered. We reached the house of that honorable Christian, Mrs. Fletcher, about five o'clock. My spirit was awed and humbled, not only by the noble character of Mrs. F., but by the recollection of the sacred roof under which I was. I



would gladly have taken my seat at the threshold of the door, for I felt unworthy to advance any further. But I was soon made to forget my wretched self, my attention being turned to better subjects. While in converse with Mrs. Fletcher, I felt that sacred influence which I desire ever to feel. Glory be to our adorable Savior, he condescended to be present with us, and my soul found it a refreshing season. Here indeed the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, and seems to shine continually. Here the Lord giveth rain in its season, and the souls of the inhabitants are like a well watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. Here is a Christian *indeed*. Alas! what am I? what have I been doing? Surely no more than slumbering, creeping, dragging on in my heavenly journey. Lord, in mercy speak unto me, that I may go forward, and let me run the race set before me.

The first remark Mrs. Fletcher made, was on the shortness of her breath, occasioned by a complaint from which she had long suffered. With an animated countenance she said, "She often thought death could not be far distant. Sometime since," she added, "I had a dangerous illness, which my friends expected would carry me off, and I began to rejoice in the belief that it was my Lord's will I should speedily join my dear friends in heaven. But my disorder taking an unexpected turn, I perceived my time of release was not to be yet, but that God would have me live a little longer; and blessed be his name, I found I had no choice; I could equally embrace his will either for life or death. I felt the will of my God like unto a soft pillow, upon which I could lie down, and find rest and safety in all circumstances. O, it is a blessed thing to sink into the will of God in all things! Absolute resignation to the divine will baffles a thousand temptations; and confidence in our Savior carries us sweetly through a thousand trials. I find it good to be in the balance, awfully weighed every day, for life or death."

She then gave us a wonderful and pleasing account of the Rev. Melville Horne, and read a letter with a history of his voyage to the new settlement—the storms and dangers he and his wife encountered, and how astonishingly they were preserved from any thing like repining, or questioning the goodness and mercy of God, or his own call of duty in the course he was taking, notwithstanding the opposition he experienced. They had both given themselves up for lost, expecting the next returning billow to have sunk the ship; and they were waiting and looking for death, not only with composure, but in a spirit of rejoicing; a strong evidence of great faith, especially when all

the circumstances were considered. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Mrs. F. remarked, "Then is faith the strongest, when it can lay hold on God at the time every thing seems to go against us; when the way is hedged up with thorns, or, as Habakkuk expresses it, 'although the fig tree shall not blossom.' Lord increase my faith."

Speaking of the diseases of my own heart, she replied, "Come to Jesus!" adding, "I feel sometimes as though all I had to say to everybody was, Come to Jesus! don't be kept back; if you feel you have done amiss, and have received wounds, where can you go but to Jesus? He has every thing to give that you can want. In every circumstance, in every situation, come freely to your Savior!" But my treacherous memory will not retain the encouraging, inviting, persuasive expressions she here made use of. O, Thou who alone teachest to profit, write them upon my heart, and bring them to my remembrance when they will be most useful.

After our dear Mrs. Fletcher had prayed with us, we parted. Three such hours I have not spent for a long season. I esteem this interview as one of my choicest favors. O that I may be the better for it!

Among other things she related a dream which had been made useful to one who had grown negligent and slothful in the ways of God.

Went to the Dale to sleep. A most beautiful and enchanting place, abounding with the wonders of nature: but no sight in this world can be half so animating and astonishing, or so beautiful, as that of a true Christian—a new creature—an image of him in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed; a proof of what divine grace can do.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

The following communication has been furnished us by the good sister to whom it was written.

DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST,—I again take an opportunity of writing to you, in answer to your request. I have not forgotten that you requested me to write my Christian experience and send it to you. I will now comply with your wish; but I do not



feel competent to write it so as to have it edifying to you or any one else.

In 1826, at the age of sixteen, I went to a camp-meeting in the town of G., the morning that it broke up. The people were singing and giving the parting hand when I entered the encampment. Such solemnity never before arrested my heart, I saw and heard like a criminal. I seemed to hear a solemn voice calling me to repentance.

I then gave the consent of my mind to seek the pardon of my sins. I left the ground with a burdened and sinking heart; all nature was dressed in sadness and sorrow to me. I went mourning from day to day in deep distress. I sought for rest, but found it not until the end of seven weeks. That day I never shall forget; I was ready to sink in despair; I felt that God could not pardon such a rebel as I had been; I saw that I was condemned, and justly condemned. In the evening I went to a prayer meeting; after entering the house I began to reflect more deeply upon my sad condition. I thought the door of mercy was closed against me, and that evening would be the last that I could live to see in such distress. With a view of the hand of justice held out against me, I arose to give the relation of my feelings. While I was talking, I bowed down, and told the people that I was determined there to die, pleading for mercy. I plead earnestly for about an hour. While in the bitterest agony of soul, I saw Christ sitting on his throne, with his hand lifted up and interceding for me, which caused me to hope. I continued to cry, and immediately after, by an eye of faith, I saw a narrow road just before me, that led up into heaven, and Christ at a distance coming to meet me, with a pardon in his hand. He met me; yes, his arms were extended, he clasped me, and raised me out of that dark and dreadful abyss that I viewed myself to be in, and placed me in this narrow road, and beckoned me to follow him. I could then rejoice and praise my Redeemer with all my ransomed powers. In this way I bore my cross and followed my Savior. Never, never shall I forget his glorious appearance; it was like that of the sun, that I could behold but for an instant.

It was nearly two years after this that I began to feel that there was a higher attainment than that of justification, for I read in the holy Bible that without holiness no one could see God in peace; and the spirit of truth taught me the same. I saw daily that I had an unsanctified heart, and prayed that God would cleanse me from all sin. But instead of giving my heart to him, as I ought, I began to inquire of Christians their views of the

doctrine of holiness ; but not finding that instruction that I needed, I thought I would seek to become a Bible Christian, and say but little about it. I lived in this manner until 1839 ; then I became sick and weary of living in this course, and I began to plead with God that he would forgive my past neglect ; I felt that he heard and answered my prayer. I could pray for the sinner and feel that I had access to the throne of grace, but when I went to God with my own case, all was darkness and death. Notwithstanding the evidence I had of my forgiveness, my mind was like the troubled sea ; I knew that I was not in a safe state, and I resolved that I would seek for the blessing of perfect love. The subject was of deep interest to me until near the end of the year 1841, then I declared war anew with the powers of darkness, that I would fight until I had won the victory.

New year's day morning I went to Br. H.'s church, (in Boston,) to a prayer meeting. My desires became more and more intense through the meeting and intermission. I felt like one alone in some desolate place, looking and waiting for a deliverer. I returned to the afternoon meeting with a spirit of heaviness. the language of my heart was, O that I knew where I might find him, scarcely knowing what was said until a brother arose and began to talk. He said that he and a number of others stayed at the recess for the express purpose of praying for a special blessing that afternoon. He said that while he was praying he saw Christ on the cross ! I heard no more, for that instant the cloud of darkness separated, and I saw Christ. While beholding him he became a body of light, and that light shone upon me, and my mind was calmed, and I felt a great peace ; I felt like a little child.

After the meeting closed I returned home, and on my way the devil assailed me, and told me that I was nearly insane, for I had been so intense, and extended my thoughts to such a degree, that it had almost deprived me of my reason. I bid him begone, for I had seen the Savior, and I would not doubt it. As I entered my room, such transporting joys as then vibrated through my soul I cannot describe. I began to whisper praise to God with all my ransomed powers, my song was glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace. O what heavenly music filled the room. After praising God for a while, I again saw Christ. He was just before me. He took me into his arms as a parent would an infant, and turned himself around towards a large number of blazing lights, and held me towards them, and they began to bow. How can I describe what I then felt ; I think I can describe it best to say it was indescribable.



I could then call God my Father, and Christ my Savior, Priest and King. I was filled unutterably full of the glory of God. It appeared that the atmosphere in which I breathed was heaven, and I felt that I rested daily in the arms of my Savior, until I formed an acquaintance with you. Then sister, you know that I often said that it was only to look and live. I say it to-day, it is only to look and live. My soul breathes after inward purity and holiness. I feel that I must now draw to a close, or my epistle will be tedious to you. Farewell, J. T. P.

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#### SIMPLICITY AND PURITY.

\* SIMPLICITY and purity are the two wings by which a man is lifted up above all earthly things. Simplicity is in the intention; purity in the affection. Simplicity tends to God; purity apprehends and tastes him.—*Wesley*.

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We hope that all who have any doubt as to the meaning of the seventh of Romans will read brother Smith's article, on the 241st page of this work. There are a few expressions about ability and the will from which a part of our readers will dissent. But we publish the article to show that this chapter gives the experience of Saul of Tarsus, not the apostle Paul. Thank God, he had a better hope. Read the argument. We consider it triumphant. There are many points in it well worth the attention even of those who are established in the truth of this matter.

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We have been sorry to have the May and June Guides delayed so long. The principal reason is, we could not get matter for publication. A very few individuals have provided the most of the matter for us for several months. To them we feel under the deepest obligation. We hope they will continue their favors. And we would respectfully suggest to many of our readers who might write for us, that if they will do their duty in this respect, they will relieve us of a heavy burden, and be able to get the Guide in proper season in future. Shall it be done?

A GOOD OFFER.—To any of our subscribers who will send us the pay in advance for the coming year, with one dollar also for a new subscriber, before the 20th of August, we will give an elegant likeness, (steel engraving) of Dr. Fisk. We shall bind it in their September number of the Guide, or if they prefer it, we will deliver the likeness to order, suitable for a large frame. We should think this, in addition to the desire of doing good, a sufficient inducement for an effort.

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A WORD TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.—Some of you yet owe for the third volume of the Guide!! More than two thousand of you owe for the fourth volume, which should have been paid for a year ago. Is this right? Is it not an open violation of the principles of Christian holiness? If the Guide is worth reading, we deserve our pay, and should have it without so much dunning. We would like, however, to forgive the past, on condition that the delinquents make immediate payment of all arrearages, with the dollar in advance for the fifth volume. Now let this difficulty be settled. The terms are just and friendly.

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We come to the close of another volume. We have been refreshed by our labors on our humble sheet, and we have the testimony of some good friends that the Guide has been useful. To God be all the glory. In the language of one of our most valued correspondents, we ask the reader —

“When at the hour of prayer thy heart  
The fervor of its love discovers,  
In secret as thou kneel’st apart,  
And many an angel round thee hovers,  
O, then remember me!

“When down thy cheeks the tear-drops roll,  
Of gratitude for sins forgiven,  
And thou dost feel within thy soul  
A ray of joy just sent from heaven,  
O, then remember me!

“For who that sees thee trembling, kneeling,  
Or may thy meek entreaties hear,  
To Heaven so fervently appealing,  
Will not believe that God is near?  
O, then remember me!

“Ask not for earthly pomp or pleasure;  
A humble, meek, and holy heart,  
To me is far a greater treasure  
Than earth’s vain glories can impart.  
O, thus remember me!”



